Attached are assignments for each of our class sessions.

These are subject to change throughout the semester as I adjust class material based on the progression of class and happenings in the world.

**** Please check Blackboard frequently for updates. ****

Blackboard is the definitive source of information about the class.

Thank you.
SESSION 1: Introduction to Strategy & Porter’s Five Forces

In this session, we will discuss the semester ahead and dive into a classic strategy case about the soft drink industry. We will spend the first part of the class going through a course overview and discussing expectations. While this is a required course, I would like to get a sense for what you hope to accomplish during the semester and learn about your previous experiences related to strategy formation and implementation.

We will start the semester with the “Cola Wars” case. It is a very rich case with many interesting considerations. In analyzing industry structure, we will introduce Porter’s Five Forces strategic framework. Porter’s model is the most widely used strategic framework, and we will come back to it throughout the semester, so it is important to get a solid grounding to start. Please be sure to read the case thoroughly and prepare the study questions since we will spend this first session in a highly interactive discussion analyzing the case.

(Note: Readings this week are particularly heavy to get us started with basic material.)

Required Material:

- **Case**: Cola Wars Continue: Coke and Pepsi in 2010 (9-711-462 – In HBP coursepack)
- **Baum & Latham Textbook**:
  - Introduction (p. xiiv – xvi)
  - Workshop 1, Strategy Defined (p. 1-10)
- **Articles**:
  - “Strategy Reading: Introduction to Strategy” (8097 – In HBP coursepack)
  - Porter, Michael, “The Five Competitive Forces That Shape Strategy” (on LibGuide)

Study Questions: (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

1. Create a Five Forces analysis of the soft drink industry by considering how Porter’s Five Forces model applies to the soft drink industry.
2. Why, historically, has the soft drink industry been so profitable?
3. Compare the economics of the concentrate business to that of the bottling business: why is the profitability so different?
4. How can Coke and Pepsi sustain their profits in the wake of flattening demand and growing popularity of non-CSDs?
SESSION 2: Industry Analysis

Apple is one of the iconic corporations of our time. The strategic challenges the company has addressed, and continues to address, could keep us busy all semester. In this session, we will build on the conversation of the previous week and continue with our discussion of industry analysis, and will also discuss competitive positioning. We will also spend some time starting to discuss the role of technology standards in competitive strategy.

Required Material:
- **Case:** Apple Inc. in 2015 (9-715-456 – In HBP coursepack)
- **Baum & Latham Textbook:**
  - Workshop 2, Understanding the Business Climate (p. 11-20)
  - Skim Workshop 3, SWOT and Generic Strategies (p. 21-30)
  - Workshop 4, Five Forces: Pressure Points on Your Company’s Profitability (p. 31-46)
- **Articles:**
    
    **[Read up to Section 2.5]** – Note that this reading will be critical for your first writing assignment.
  - [We will also draw upon last week’s readings.]

**Article for Group Presentation**

Optional Material:

1. Walter Isaacson’s biography of Steve Jobs is excellent. If you are interested in Apple, this is a very good business book to read:

Study Questions: (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

1. What, historically, have been Apple’s competitive advantages?
2. Analyze the personal computer industry. Why did Apple struggle historically in PCs?
3. How sustainable is Apple’s competitive position in smartphones?
4. Evaluate Apple’s strategy for Apple Watch. Has Tim Cook taken the right approach? Would you suggest any course corrections?
Session 3: Corporate Strategy in a Multi-Unit Enterprise

Disney is one of the best-known brands in the world, and has remained so for 85+ years. This case provides a look at how diversified, multi-business organizations create a corporate advantage. We will analyze corporate strategy looking at the history of Disney focusing on the Eisner years and strategic moves of recent years. Disney is a diversified global enterprise and we will also analyze Disney to study diversification and its limits.

Required Assignment:

- **Case**: Walt Disney Co.: The Entertainment King (9-701-035 – In HBP coursepack)
- **Baum & Latham Textbook**:
- **Articles**:
  - **Visit Walt Disney Company website and explore their current businesses: [https://thewaltdisneycompany.com/disney-companies](https://thewaltdisneycompany.com/disney-companies)**
  - **This is a training brochure from Disney’s external training group: [https://cdns3.trainingindustry.com/media/3647005/disney%20brand%20loyalty.pdf](https://cdns3.trainingindustry.com/media/3647005/disney%20brand%20loyalty.pdf)**

** Article for Group Presentation

Optional Reading:


Study Questions: (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

1. Why has Disney been successful for so long?
2. What did Michael Eisner do to rejuvenate Disney? Specifically, how did he increase net income in his first four years?
3. Has Disney diversified too far in recent years? If so, how and in what ways? If not, how can you support that assertion?
Netflix disrupted a dominant incumbent player through a superior business model. In this session, we will compare two different business models in the U.S. home entertainment industry and analyze each. We will use this case also to learn about the distinction between sustaining and disruptive innovation. The theory of disruptive innovation, including the frameworks and tools associated with it, is one of the most popular in strategic management. Today’s discussion will allow us to start exploring how to apply these frameworks and tools as we consider alternative business models.

**Required Material:**

- **Case:** Netflix in 2011 (9-615-007 – In HBP coursepack)
- **Baum & Latham Textbook:**
  - Workshop 6, The Value Chain: The Ins and Outs of Your Business (p. 61-73)
- **Articles:**

** = Article for Group Presentation

- **Videos:**
  - This video shows the Sunnyvale, CA operations at a time slightly after the time of the case. It gives a good view of the operations: Netflix Distribution Mix Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOXqGEWW2d8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOXqGEWW2d8) (Time: 10:42)
Optional Material:

- Video: Clayton M. Christensen on Disruptive Innovation: https://youtu.be/WxwR_TTuKdc
- This is a video of Clay Christensen explaining the concept of “Jobs to be Done,” which is a fundamental underlying concept behind disruptive innovation: https://youtu.be/f84LymEs67Y
- This is the book I co-authored in 2008. There are inexpensive used copies available on Amazon. The book has a good summary of disruptive innovation, and provides information on how to apply these theories in practice:
  o I suggest reading the Introduction.

Study Questions: (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

A lot has happened since the time of this case, but our learning will come from setting yourself in the time of the case, not today. With that in mind, complete the following questions as you read the case:

1. How would you characterize the differences between Blockbuster’s and Netflix’s business models?
2. Was Netflix disruptive? How? How would you evaluate Blockbuster’s response?
3. What other theories help clarify the landscape?
4. Did Reed Hastings make the right move in trying to separate the DVD-by-mail business from the streaming business? How do you think he should proceed now?
Session 5: Core Competencies with Guest Speaker: Bernice Cramer, Bose Corporation

In today’s class we will have an esteemed guest speaker: Bernice Cramer of Bose Corporation. I have known Ms. Cramer since the 1990’s and she is a brilliant executive who has had a wide range of experiences at international firms, start-ups, and most recently at Bose Corporation through a number of strategic shifts. Ms. Cramer will discuss her career and use some examples to discuss the strategic concept of core competencies.

Required Material:
- No case this week – Guest speaker
- Baum & Latham Textbook:
  - Workshop 7, The Core Competency: What’s Your Secret Sauce (p. 75-86)
- Articles:
    - Though it is an older article, it is a classic and covers important concepts in strategy.
  - ** There will be other readings announced later in the semester

** = Article for Group Presentation

Study Questions: (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

1. TBD
Session 6: Competitive Advantage & Role of the CEO

Elon Musk is a visionary, bold, and sometimes controversial CEO. Today, we will evaluate Musk as a strategic thinker and consider what we can learn from his vision, risks, and choices. We will study the businesses that Musk leads: SpaceX, Tesla, and SolarCity. Because Elon Musk is such a strong personality and CEO, this case provides the opportunity to explore the role of the CEO in shaping and implementing strategy.

Required Material:
- Case: Elon Musk’s Big Bets (9-717-431 – In HBP coursepack)
- Baum & Latham Textbook:
  - Workshop 8, Diversifications: Where Do You Go from Here—and How Do You Get There? (p. 87-102)

** = Article for Group Presentation

Optional Material:
- This is a fun and worthwhile book about Elon Musk:

Study Questions: (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

1. As a board member of Tesla, would you have voted for or against the merger with Solar City? Why?
2. Assess Musk’s strategy to build the Gigafactory: What are the pros and cons of building the largest factory in the world for batteries?
3. Assess Musk’s strategy for Tesla: If you were Elon Musk, would you drive Tesla to become a large automobile company, a battery company, a sustainable energy company?
4. Would you advise Musk to continue to shoot for the moon (or more accurately Mars)? Stay the course, but take on nothing new? Or retrench, and narrow his focus?
Session 7: Sustaining Growth & Building Communities

This week we are going to study what one might argue is one of the greatest corporate transformations in recent history. LEGO is a mature company that grew gradually, declined rapidly, and then renewed itself to become the most profitable toymaker in the world. Central to LEGO’s management model is the ability to find the right balance among growing through innovation, staying true to its core, and controlling operational complexity. While we will go through a discussion of the whole case, we will focus especially on LEGO’s efforts to build communities as part of their innovation strategy.

Required Material:
- **Case**: LEGO (HBS 9-613-004 – In HBP coursepack)
- **Baum & Latham Textbook**:
  - Workshop 9, International Strategy: Stepping Out of Your Domestic Market (p. 103-115)

** = Article for Group Presentation

Required Videos:
- Lego Club TV, The LEGO Story: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdDU_BBJW9Y
- 1955 LEGO System Commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aGLzfZ3HJU
- Duplo and LEGO Building Blocks: https://youtu.be/YxWVSFs5DaE
- Legomania: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnXZnBtP0O8
- LEGO Ideas Third 2014 Review Results: Announcing LEGO Ideas #013: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUxOsMlY7II
- Putting the Pieces Together - Jorgen Vig Knudstorp & Kirsty Wark at...: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6cClpRLAY0

Optional Material:
Study Questions: (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

1. What led the LEGO Group to the edge of bankruptcy (by 2004)? Please focus on the management moves during “the growth period that wasn’t” (1993-1998) and “the fix that wasn’t” (1999-2004).
2. Why did Knudstorp’s turnaround strategy work? In your opinion, which actions were the most effective? Which actions were the least effective? Be specific.
3. Should LEGO launch the new line of board games?
4. Consider how LEGO has been using external communities to help in their innovation processes. Are there other ways you can envision LEGO engaging with external communities (complementors) to further their business goals?
Session 8: Platform Business Transitions

In today’s class, we will go through an introduction to multi-sided platforms (MSPs) and network-based businesses. These businesses facilitate interactions between groups of users, and are increasingly becoming dominant players in the global economy. The strategic considerations and trade-offs related to MSP’s are not always the same as those in non-platform businesses. Thus, MSPs deserve to be studied separately.

In particular, we will consider the challenges faced by firms that have traditionally been product-based and are now attempting to transition all or part of their business to platform-based. Intuit, with their QuickBooks product line, provides an excellent example of a company addressing strategic issues and trade-offs associated with product-to-platform transitions.

Required Material:
- **Case:** Intuit QuickBooks: From Product to Platform (9-714-433 – In HBP coursepack)
- **Articles:**

** Article for Group Presentation.

Optional Material:
4. [http://platformrevolution.com/](http://platformrevolution.com/) is the website of a book that provides a very good comprehensive overview of the topic of platform-based businesses.
Study Questions: (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

1. Why and how exactly might Xero (and similar competitors) be a threat to QuickBooks? How concerned should Intuit be about competitors such as Xero?

2. What should the business model be for QuickBooks Financing?
   a) Products or services offered directly by Intuit, similar to Financial Supplies?
   b) Open marketplace similar to Google AdWords?
   c) Pre-negotiated offers from a limited set of pre-selected providers?
   For your chosen model, what is your proposed pricing structure?

3. What should the business model be for Concierge?
   a) Products or services offered directly by Intuit, similar to Financial Supplies?
   b) Open marketplace similar to Google AdWords?
   c) Pre-negotiated offers from a limited set of pre-selected providers?
   For your chosen model, what is your proposed pricing structure?

4. To what extent should Intuit pursue platform opportunities for QuickBooks?
   a) Stay focused on QuickBooks as a pure product?
   b) Peer-to-peer platform for QuickBooks customers (e.g., ICN). No Intuit Partner Platform (IPP), no QBF and no Concierge?
   c) Peer-to-peer platform plus platform for third-party developers (IPP). No Concierge and no QBF, but possibly rely on third-party developers to develop similar initiatives?
   d) Peer-to-peer platform plus platform for third-party developers plus Concierge and/or QBF?
Session 9: Open Innovation & Crowdsourcing

Today we will use a multi-media case, which is a little different than those we have been reading this semester. This case includes a series of videos of various key managers and employees at Threadless, a Chicago-based online t-shirt company. The case provides background about an innovative company that uses distributed innovation (a.k.a., crowdsourcing) and community-based business models to source and evaluate designs. Building on our discussions of multi-sided platforms, which often enable external parties to innovate in ways that benefit a central firm, we will discuss how organizations can use open innovation and crowdsourcing to leverage communities to further their innovation goals.

Required Material:

- **Case:** Threadless: The Business Community (608-707-HTM-ENG – In HBP coursepack)  
  {Note: The recommended approach for going through the case is to begin by reading the text on the web page, then watch the embedded video clips, and finally, review the exhibits. Note there are a lot of links in the case and you should click on them and review the materials.}

- **Articles:**

- **Explore the Threadless website (www.threadless.com) to get a sense for the company today.**
  - Read some blogs and postings on the site.
  - **Register and vote for designs.**

**Article for Group Presentation**

Optional Material:

   o Amazon link: http://www.amazon.com/Wisdom-Crowds-James-Surowiecki/dp/0385721706/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1460035394&sr=8-1&keywords=wisdom+of+crowds

**Study Questions:** (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

1. What are the similarities and differences between a community-driven product development process and a traditional product development process within a firm?
2. What motivates community members to participate? What is Threadless offering its community members?
3. How are winning designs currently selected? Figure 1 and Table 1 show sample designs and their respective scores. How would you go about selecting winning designs?
4. What are the barriers to entry for this kind of business?
5. In what other areas might this model work? How might you leverage or exploit this model for innovation and product development in your business (or a business you can imagine running)?
6. What should be Threadless’s response to the offer from Large Retailer?
Session 10: Guest Speaker: Mr. John Kawola, President, North America, Ultimaker

In this session, we will welcome Mr. John Kawola, President, North America, of Ultimaker, a firm focused on local digital manufacturing. Mr. Kawola has had a very successful career in industry and combines expertise in sales, technology, and engineering. He has worked extensively in the 3-D printing industry, and also has experience as a director and advisor to multiple companies related to digital manufacturing and automation.

Required Material:

- No case today because of guest speaker
- Article:
  - ** Core Curriculum Reading: Setting Aspirations- Mission, Vision and Values (8114-HTM-ENG – in HBP coursepack)
- Baum & Latham Textbook:
  - Workshop 10, Measuring Strategic Success: It Ain’t a Strategy If You Can’t Measure It (p. 117-126)
- Read Mr. Kawola’s LinkedIn profile here: Mr. Kawola’s LinkedIn profile is here: https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-kawola-b6b967/
- Familiarize yourself with Mr. Kawola’s firm by going through their website here https://ultimaker.com/. Be sure you understand their customers, products, services, etc.
- TBD – Related to Mr. Kawola’s industry

** Article for Group Presentation

Optional Material:

- TBD

*** Please check Blackboard for any updates. ***

Study Questions: (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

1. TBD
SESSION 11: Financial Technologies (Fintech) -- Guest Speaker: Ms. Valisha Graves, Morgan Stanley

In this session, we will have a guest instructor to guide a class discussion about the emerging financial technology (“fintech”) industry. **Ms. Valisha Graves, Executive Director, Technology Division, Morgan Stanley** will join us and teach a session about changes underway in the financial services sector driven by new technologies and innovations. Ms. Graves’ bio is posted on Blackboard.

Please pay close attention to the study questions and go through all of them prior to class.

**Required Material:**
1. McKinsey Remaking the bank for an ecosystem world October 2017
2. Bypassing the Bankers, The Atlantic, September 2014
3. Andreessen on Finance: ‘We Can Reinvent the Entire Thing’ October 18, 2014

**Optional Material:**
3. Key Takeaways from WEF’s Beyond Fintech: A Pragmatic Assessment Of Disruptive Potential In Financial Services *(summary version)*
**Study Questions:** (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

1. What are some of the key technology drivers that have led to dramatic changes and new innovations in financial services? What are the non-technology factors?
2. Identify the various fintech strategies. Compare and contrast a few fintech strategies (e.g., noting strategic advantages and disadvantages, costs, benefits, risks, economic trade-offs, etc.). Examine various firms’ willingness to buy, build, partner and the relative costs and benefits of their respective strategies.
3. What is the value proposition for retail and institutional customers in the new fintech landscape?
4. What is the sustainable competitive advantage for traditional players versus the insurgents (new entrants)? Where do these new players operate in the value chain?
SESSION 12: Competitive Positioning & Strategic Renewal

Today, we are going to discuss two cases that build upon each other. While we frequently discuss large organizations, these cases focus on a small business and challenges of striving to save it and ultimately grow it. The protagonist in the cases is a woman who is a recent MBA graduate aiming to save an ailing family business. Because this case uses a relatively simple business, we can dive deeply into the dynamics of a turnaround and concentrate both on the issues for the business and the role of the general manager.

Required Material:
- Case: Westlake Lanes (4431–In HBP coursepack)
- Case: Sugar Bowl (9-913-537 – In HBP coursepack)
- Article:
  - **“Building your Company’s Vision”** (on Libguide)
- Baum & Latham Textbook:
  - Workshop 10, Measuring Strategic Success: It Ain’t a Strategy If You Can’t Measure It (p. 117-126)

** Article for Group Presentation

Study Questions: (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

Westlake Questions:
1. What problems does Shelby Givens face when she begins work at Westlake Lanes? What advice would you give her to prepare her for her first day?
2. By the end of the case, what actions has Givens taken to address the problems outlined in Question 1?
3. Which of the actions were appropriate? In appropriate? What other actions might Givens have taken? Consider organizational, marketing, operations, and financial actions.
4. Do you agree with Givens’s prioritization of the challenges?
5. How should Givens evaluate whether to build, sell, or liquidate the business? What information does she need to make this decision?

Sugar Bowl Questions:
1. What challenges does Shelby Givens face during the various phases of the turnaround?
2. By the end of the case, what has Givens done to address the challenges outlined at each stage?

3. Which of the actions were most successful in resolving the challenges? Which were least successful? What other options might Givens have pursued?

4. Is Sugar Bowl a viable business? Which forces have the most positive, or negative, impact on the business’s profitability?

5. How should Givens evaluate the investor’s offer to buy the business, and the NY consulting offer? Consider both financial and personal goals.

6. Once Sugar Bowl’s financials are more stable, what changes could Givens make to build a stronger organization and culture?
Session 13: Sustainability and Strategy

In this session, we will explore the role of sustainability in strategic decision making and implementation. The case called “Unilever’s New Global Strategy” will allow us to analyze the appropriateness of a new global corporate strategy, consider the requirements for effective transformational organizational change, and explore the nature of corporate social responsibility, including its power and limitations.

We will also consider the effectiveness of a CEO and corporate leadership team managing this type of transition. Finally, we will consider how to evaluate options for the future, decide on an action plan, and translate general strategic proposals into specific actions.

Required Material:
- **Case**: Unilever’s New Global Strategy (712438 – In HBP coursepack)
- **Baum & Latham Textbook**:
  - Workshop 11, Strategy Implementation: Getting Your Strategic Ducks in a Row (p. 127-140)
- **Articles**:

** Article for Group Presentation

Optional Material:
Study Questions: (Prior to class, please complete written answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.)

1. How would you evaluate Paul Polman’s 2010 decision to implement a new strategy based on the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan? What benefits did it offer? What risks did it present?
2. How effective has the implementation of the new strategy been to date? What has it done most effectively? What problems or concerns do you have with the implementation?
3. What actions should the company take now? Which of the three options identified at the end of the case would you recommend management take?
4. How would you go about implementing your recommendation?
SESSION 14: Course Wrap-up and Q&A

For our last session, we will not have a case study or group presentation. Instead, I plan to provide a wrap-up of course topics and go through any strategy-related material we may not have covered during the semester that you would like to discuss. I will also leave time at the end of the session to have an open discussion related to career matters.

To make this session as productive and useful as possible, I would like to ask you to submit questions beforehand. Each student can submit up to three questions. Questions can be on any topic. (However, given that flexibility, I reserve the right to avoid or modify questions as appropriate.)

Required Material:
- Baum & Latham Textbook:
  - Workshop 12, Wrap-up: Mastering Strategy… and Beyond! (p. 141-146)

Question topics should fall into one of three categories listed below.

1. Questions related to class material.
   - Is there something you heard in class that you still don’t really understand?
   - Is there something we discussed in class that you are wondering if it can be applied in another way?

2. Questions related to strategy formation and implementation topics that we have not discussed.
   - Is there a strategy topic that is not covered in the syllabus that you are wondering about?
   - Have you heard about a particular company’s strategic move that you would like to discuss in class?

3. Questions related to career, jobs, work/life balance, etc.
   - In the past, students have asked about my career progression. I will be happy to walk briefly through my career path and explain some of the decisions I made.
   - Is there anything you might like to discuss related to career decisions, jobs, work/life balance, etc.?